

AMERICAN ART IN THE MAKING

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GLIMPSES INTO THE GROWTH OF AMERICA'S ART-LIFE

WHEN Phidias chiselled his "Athene Parthenos" and Zeuxis immortalized "Helena of Kroton" on the canvas, Chimi Chassku, the ruler of ancient Peru, built the Truxillo, his famous palace in Cuzco, then the center of America's oldest civilization. The Parthenon and the Truxillo were as far apart in point of artistic conception as they were in the number of geographical miles. Two thousand years later Michelangelo Buonarotti, when but seventeen years of age, breathed into marble "the battle of Hercules with the Centaurs" while his equally renowned fellow countryman, Columbus, found his sublimest imaginations realized in the discovery of Cuzco's old continent, which he called the New World. And when a century and a quarter afterwards the Pilgrim Fathers left their British homes by way of Holland, to start a new nation in the New World, the glory of artistic Greece and Italy had already kindled new fires in the stolid North, and Rembrandt and Rubens had inspired a sturdier race of men with new ideals of the beautiful. Hence, the men who had been here and the men who came from Southern and Northern shores, Latin and Anglo-Saxon, Puritan and Cavalier, Dutch and Teuton, all—whether conscious of it or not—were potentially imbued with the artistic culture of the ages, endowed with the latent heritage of Peru and Mexico, of Athens and Rome, of Antwerp and Brussels, of Nuremberg, Paris and Madrid.

But the glory of the Truxillo had faded long since, and the tomahawk and poisoned arrow, chiselled and carved in quite different fashion from that which prevailed among their Peruvian fore-runners, challenged the claims of the newcomers from across the Atlantic and forced them into combat. The struggle for the bare necessities of life carried on against a thousand odds exhausted all the physical energies of the settlers and stunted the growth of in-

herited desires for the amenities of the Old World civilization. It took more than a century of the severest kind of toil to gain a foothold in the wilderness, to conquer the soil, to open pathways to the great rivers, to subdue the sorely tried ferocious Red Man and to build the well-protected shelters for man and beast. Moreover, the religious fanaticism of Puritan and Pilgrim alike frowned upon every attempt on the part of the more liberal minded element among them to enrich in color or in marble either the house of God or their own homes. And yet, the new environment with its vast stretches of forest and field, of mountain and valley, of river and sea, with its thrilling adventures and dangerous exploits, its daily demands of heroic courage and unflinching devotion to home and country—all this gradually but surely developed extraordinary capacity for extraordinary tasks, a quick readiness for daily emergencies, a keen appreciation for vast undertakings and withall a sober sense and sympathetic regard for deeds, fine and noble and beautiful. If Kant is right in his definition of art as "the capacity for genius" surely here was a fruitful soil; if it is art's highest mission, to portray as its sublimest ideals the perfect man and the perfect woman, the gigantic battle for human freedom begun in the earliest days of colonial history should furnish ample material; if art is the imitation of nature there never was here any lack in variety and wealth of themes; if art is interpretation of nature who but a race of men living close to nature's heart, wrenching from her treasures and secrets, can tell her meaning and her mission; if, finally, art is the highest form of self-expression those who framed the Declaration of Independence, and sealed it with their blood at Bunker Hill and Gettysburg, are expected to furnish their share of first class art and artists. A glimpse into the history of the development of the fine arts in America will show whether these expectations have been or will be fulfilled.

In the absence of any established standards of chronology I venture to suggest four distinct periods in the development of art in the United States:

(1) The period of awakening under purely English influences, practically covering the era of Benjamin West, 1756-1820. (2) The period of apprenticeship in the fundamentals of drawing and modeling, largely under German influences of the Düsseldorf School dating from the work of Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School, to that of Morris Hunt, i. e., from 1825 to 1850. (3) The period of mastering color under French influence from Hunt

to Chase and (4) the period of independent American art, beginning about 1878 with the organization of the Society of American Artists.

In the beginning it was preeminently an art of representation, a sort of anthropomorphic art, a representation of the concrete, of the flesh and blood of matter, largely inherited from the Renaissance, which on the one hand, illustrated the common and collective belief in religion, its dogma and its faith and on the other apotheosized the recovered philosophy of classic Greece with its firm belief in the life and worship of the human form as the highest embodiment of beauty. Portraiture of a conventional type prevailed. Gradually, as the problems of real life were grasped pictures mainly for representation became food for children and art developed into the medium of interpreting expression and awakened to a sense of beauty in the abstract. The stress was no longer, as with the classic masters, on body and form, but on light and color. The struggle was a complex and a difficult one and the story is not always inspiring and interesting.

THE ERA OF BENJAMIN WEST

1756—1820

The first prophet who arose on American soil to proclaim the mission of the beautiful was a Quaker lad, born and raised in the little backwoods town Springfield, close to Penn's good old village. To him, as to Abraham of old, the call came to leave his home and friends, who distrusted and reviled his new gospel. So one day, about 1756, Benjamin West arrived in Philadelphia and founded American art. He came by way of Lancaster, the garden-spot of the United States, where he had earned his first spurs in original portrait-painting. The Red Man had taught him how to prepare colors from berries and a brush from the hairs of the cat's tail. West, however, was not only a genius, but also a darling of destiny. He began in Philadelphia a career, which in many respects was to change the crude American notions of art. Among his contemporaries were the sculptor Canova in Italy, the restorer of classic idealism, Gainsborough, the founder of landscape realism in England, strongly national and original; Watteau in France, the then most elegant and delicate master of the canvas; Alvarez in Spain, classi-

cist and author of "Ganymede," and Tischbein, Mengs and others in Germany.

West spent a brief period in Italy to study neo-classicism and then entered upon his long triumphal career in London under the royal patronage of George III. "The spectacle of a colonial lad stepping from obscurity and snatching honors from the elect was startling at home and an audacious tresspass abroad." Yet, in spite of all his honors and friendships with the great on earth, West remained at heart the simple Quaker he was born, his modesty even forbidding him to sign his own canvasses. With perennial affection his gentle nature turned to the land of his birth, declining knighthood and standing firm in his loyalty to his home during the revolutionary war for freedom. And as the twilight of his years closed about him he sent back as a token of his love that impressive canvas, "Christ Healing the Sick," which hangs in the Pennsylvania Hospital, and is today one of the historic gems of that great city, while the most characteristic of his last works and perhaps his largest canvas, "Christ Rejected," adorns now one of the walls of the Philadelphia Academy and is one of the chief treasures of that art center. We are therefore not surprised that many of the creations of his brush represent the history of his native land; most notable among them are "General Wolfe in the Battle of Quebec" and "The Destruction of the French Fleet." Judged by modern standards West's pictures, though far superior to most others of his day, lack natural vigor, are in a high degree conventional and exhibiting but little knowledge of color, are purely imitations of the neo-classic school, but nevertheless respectable and commanding high prices. The seven pictures illustrating revealed religion, which he painted for the oratory at Windsor, brought him over 20,000 pounds. He dominated American painting for more than three-quarters of a century. No wonder that the "tribe of Benjamin," as West's pupils dubbed themselves, had to cross the ocean in order to educate and to maintain themselves. Their works showed talent, but they were weakly painted with the medium strongly in evidence, neither inspired nor inspiring. This period denotes the awakening of the native genius, the dawn of art appreciation as well as of art patronage. Copely of Boston, Vanderlyn of New York, Leslie of Philadelphia, chiefly portrait painters, spent some time or other under West's hospitable roof tree. So did Gilbert Stuart, an adopted son of Philadelphia, and perhaps the most masterly representative of his school, noted for his "Athenaeum pictures of Washington and

his wife," as well as for the "Landsdown portrait," now occupying a place of honor in the Philadelphia Academy.

They all, more or less, illustrated the annals of the revolution. Peale, Trumbull and Sully are names found on many noted portrait canvases of their day. When Charles William Peale came back from London he founded together with William Rush, the first sculptor of American parentage, the earliest national institution of the fine arts, the Pennsylvania Academy. Sully's Richard III and his famous portrait of young Queen Victoria are well known, and in the ancestral halls of many an old Philadelphia family the same familiar name is found on the stately monotonous canvases which tell the story of the earliest native art patrons, among them even crusty old Stephen Girard figures, who opened his house to Sully and his studio. To the same day and generation also belongs Jacob Eichholtz of Teuton extraction, who immortalized many of Lancaster's patricians and stately dames, and Bass Otis, another well-known portrait painter. Washington Allston of South Carolina and Horatio Greenough of Boston, the author of Washington's large statue in front of the Capitol, Robert Fulton, the inventor, and last, but not least, Charles Robert Leslie were distinguished lights among the "tribe of Benjamin." The new Philadelphia Academy had aroused the slumbering taste and appreciation for the fine arts among the wealthy who enabled Leslie and other talented youths to cross the Atlantic and study the old masters under West's generous guidance. However, all they did in return for America was to leave it.

After these progenitors came a host of lesser caliber, who recall the answer of the rector of Grace Church in New York to one of this class, who solicited a flattering endorsement of his art by humbly remarking: "I think you will say, sir, my paintings are tolerable." "Tolerable, why, yes," was the reply, "but who would eat a tolerable egg?" They are melodramatists, mostly men of prodigious industry, among them John Stuart of Philadelphia, Isaac Williams, Christian Schuessele, the teacher of Abbey and Eakins; James Hamilton, a follower of the great Turner, with half a genius in his erratic mode; Emanuel Leutze, a pupil of the Duesseldorf school, the author of the large canvas, "Washington crossing the Delaware," the creator of ambitious compositions of which the fresco in the "Westward Ho!" in the Capitol at Washington is the most ambitious, not to say the maddest, with confusion written all over as though an earthquake had made chaos of his reckless design. Among the best of them were William H. Furness, Jr., Lambdin and par-

ticularly Frederick Rothermel, the author of "Gettysburg" in the Harrisburg Capitol, the harbinger of a new dawn.

So much for the first century in American art, representing largely a survival of English tradition, a respectful following of Raphael, whose glories came to them tempered by the Saxon phlegm of Benjamin West. They all, more or less, painted by prescription and nature was alien to them. They helped, however, to throw modern painting into prominence and to emphasize past and present trend.

FORMATIVE FORCES

Now the forces active in the seething caldron of the Parisian Terror were to a lesser degree at work in the bloodless field of art. Liberty here meant freedom from convention, a return to nature, the forsaken mother, whose nakedness had offended. It was but fitting that the reaction should begin in France and to the Romantic school of 1830 we owe the new impulses that have been moulding native artists for a generation.

The great periods of art were always inaugurated when the prevailing conditions of life were more or less adequate to the deepest conceptions born of it. When life in its reality has become starved and frozen, art is liable to become an externality, a plaything and amusement. The breakup of the eighteenth century was like the breakup of a frost. The air was stirred, the temperature rose. A thousand springs were set free. The forgotten unity of life was restored through a new kindling and expansion of all human endowments as of a body restored to the circulation of its blood. Art partook of this general reanimation. It became expressive of the general life, sensitive to the movement of thought in science and in literature as it had rarely been before. It was no longer the toy of courts or the mirror of a complaisant bourgeoisie.

The liberation was pure gain. But it also was fraught with dangers. A picture tended more and more to become an artist's uncommissioned mind. The wholesome influence of definite established conditions was undermined as the Church and the State withdrew their patronage. The craft of painting had, moreover, lost its traditions.

One main result of the liberation of art and the licentious character of painting in particular was the signal growth of landscape

painting. It was paralleled by the predominance of lyric poetry. The classical was displaced by the romantic. In either case the personal element determined the form. Landscape painting becoming thus independent it was inevitable that its resources should be explored; just as anatomy and perspective were scientifically studied when during the early Renaissance the human body in all its naked charm was recovered for art as a theme. Even though there had not been any special discovery concerning the nature and composition of light the landscape painters would undoubtedly have followed the same pursuit. But the discoveries concerning light and the resulting invention of photography certainly became controlling influences.

Science assuredly had become the beacon light in all fields of thought and production as the century progressed. More and more it claimed the attention of the public and the service of the best talent. Here was a force the stream of which set deadly against the kindly and genial face of art. For the scientific temper is by nature opposed to the artist's temper. Francis Bacon well contrasted the two, when he said: "Science trying to subject the mind to things, art trying to subject things to the mind." With the former temper tending so strongly to tinge the thought of the century there was danger that art would lose sight of its proper starting point and its proper goal. And this, indeed, came to pass in the realistic tendencies of literature and in the attempt to portray things through the "siccum lumen" of science.

Yet in the right hands the advances of science were turned in to clear gain for art. A direct influence made itself felt especially in landscape painting in the treatment of natural illumination. This, however, was not all clear gain. The interest in problems of light which absorbed Turner's later years led him to develop a kind of painting which was new to art. But new additions of scientific data are not in themselves artistic gain. Turner's earlier works, after all, remain his masterpieces. Problems of natural illumination, while highly interesting in themselves, could, therefore, only indirectly affect the main themes of art. But the very widening of interests which marked the nineteenth century resulted in an unexampled exploration and study of non-human forms of life. Barye's sculptures and drawings did much in this respect. His close researches gave a hitherto unknown veracity and strictness to the stuff of his conceptions, but his conceptions were always those of an artist. Barye's studies of lions in the Louvre impress and fascinate by the

contained terrible power, the appalling beastliness of the creatures. Here is science nobly mastered to the use of art and many an American artist, from Hunt to the present time, has been inspired by Barye's art. But science offered not only new material, it also helped to create a certain tempering of the mind, a change of mental attribute which worked for good in men like Barye.

A certain humbling of the mind, a profounder sense of the infinite of nature, a realization of man's relation to nature, of his true place in the world—this is the spirit which we see towards the middle of the century filtering into art. It inspired noble minds with a reverence for the reality in their subjects which the eighteenth century so lamentably lacked. The type of art which expresses most fully and in justest balance the underlying forces of the nineteenth century must be sought in the art of Millet, the author of the "Angelus." He conveys the feeling that there is a deep congruity in anything that nature presents to us, that we must not be impatient to take off all its wrappings and circumstances saying "this is the whole that matters," still less, disdainful, because it does not present us with some absolute beauty we have expected. How far in such art as this have we travelled from the prevalent attitude of the eighteenth century with its wardrobe of prescribed proprieties and its scholastic corrections for the irregularities of nature. France all through this period had been the center of European art. Her people were always distinguished by an unhampered circulation of ideas. That also explains her proud self-consciousness. The subconscious may be unduly glorified nowadays, but it can not be denied that great and powerful art is rarely conscious of being dominated or warped by theory. However, in the nineteenth century external conditions accentuated this tendency to fiercely logical extremes. To other countries the Revolution came as a fervor to the spirit, a new birth of ideas, but in France it was acted out to the uttermost in flesh and blood. David carried the revolution into painting and broke violently with all the traditions of the past. Even the paint must be put on the canvas in a new way. The pupils pelted the masterpieces of Watteau. Then came Napoleon, and in a few years how frigid and far away seemed the heroics of Greeks and Romans beside the turmoils and glories of the living present! Imagination was paralyzed by the extravagant romance of reality.

Suddenly, with Waterloo, the splendor of life collapsed. Dullness, as if in a black shower of chimney pot hats, descended upon the world. It was like coming out of the theatre where great actors

animate magnificent drama to gas lamps in a rainy street. A new generation whose childhood had been dazed and dazzled by the thunderings and lightnings of Napoleon's glory, grew up into a humdrum present. The imaginative ones were thrown back on themselves; and in that balked hunger and recoil from the actual to unlimited dreamland was born the Romanticism of 1830. The fever of that movement burns in Delacroix, in Ingres it recoils and retreats to the fortress of pure line. In each of them temper works formulating ideals and forcing nature to follow. With Chasserian the oscillation appears in a single artist, but its violence is spent. Not until the middle of the century do we observe a steadying of the forces born of the revolution and its reactions; as shown in the work of men like Barye, Millet, Puvis and Rodin. The artistic creations of the eighteenth century had lacked, in Europe at least, the vitalizing touch of experience; the new age had made up for this in full measure with tragic violence and bloodshed; and the fruits of it matured in these great artists. Later, the same bent towards formulating theories and inventing battle cries, which clings to the French habit of mind, produced minor oscillations between one extreme and another among those whom science dominated, and the battles of impressionism were fought with shouting.

When we return to England we find quite a different atmosphere. There is no such free circulation of ideas as in France. Creative effort has been sporadic; genius has pursued its chosen task alone. Here have been no real movements. The Preraphaelites originated one in name; but the members of that group, such as Millais, Rosetti, and William Holman Hunt, were men of singularly diverse natures, and after a few years broke away into separate paths. But England, on that account, kept from extremes and still produced men of genius, such as Crome, Constable, Watts and the sculptor Stevens, who, refusing the academic training of the time, put himself to school with the early masters of the Italian Renaissance and silently formed the grand style which marks him the greatest of English sculptors.

However, before the American artists turned from the English to French influence, there was a mild interregnum created by the stir of another mighty revolution. Germany had reached the high water mark of her literary achievements. In poetry and philosophy she reigned supreme, and her music interpreted the new national ideals in symphonies of unparalleled depth and grandeur. In the plastic arts no rote of importance had been struck for several centuries,

since Cranach, Duerer and Holbein had expressed the nation's best and highest feeling and life during the Reformation period. But the new literary impulse brought forth a Winckelmann, who issued the first book on "The History of Art," wrought out on Rome's classic soil. It was answered by Lessing's *Laocoon* and later by August Wilhelm Schlegel's "Lectures on Art." Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in the distance; Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn, Bartholdi with Richard Wagner looming up on the horizon—all epitomized and interpreted to the nation by Goethe in Weimar and Wilhelm von Humboldt in Rome—surely their echoes should have been heard in the realms of brush and chisel. But the nation's political life was at the lowest ebb and the dramatic incidents on the historic stage were not worth recording. Rauch and Schinkel had, indeed given Berlin its first and perhaps still its fairest creations in marble and bronze, and Cornelius and his Nazarenes did some creditable work in Rome, but these efforts were sporadic, and the work of Winckelmann and Lessing resulted only in the construction of theoretic formulas, in organized systems, in the introduction of methods based on anatomy and geometry and carried to their utmost perfection in the Academy of Duesseldorf, which became the great center of realism with its stress upon the strict letter of the law of art, clever in execution, but pedantic, unimaginative and withal unaesthetic, and without any pure instinct for color. Hither the Americans began to flock, here they hoped to find ready-made formulas and clever textbooks, which would turn them into first-class artists. The New England Transcendentalists and poets had pointed to Germany and its leading minds as the profoundest interpreters of all the mysteries of life and, therefore, also of art, and voices such as Emerson's did not plead in vain.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE DUESSELDORF SCHOOL

Accidentally, Thomas Cole, of Ohio, learned the rudiments of his art from a Duesseldorf portrait painter named Stein, and the pupil ultimately surpassed the master. For when he came to New York in 1825, he attracted considerable attention by his "Views on the Hudson." In the course of time he became the founder of the "Hudson River School," the first distinctive art

group on American soil, but his pictures were still exhibited at the Royal Academy in London, where they became very popular. Among his followers was William T. Richards, a Philadelphian, who began to draw the sea as he felt it, drawing its restless undulations and mountainous upheavals with a precision which made him, at least "a master of drawing," as his pictures in the Metropolitan Museum at New York and in the Philadelphia Academy amply testify. Moreover, Richards brought to his art as no American had ever done before him that knowledge and love of the kindred art of letters which mean so much for the finer subtlety of insight, but are ignored so often for one of paint alone. His friends say that he could talk when in the mood, with profundity shot through with lovable humor on the fancy of Wordsworth, till his hearers were suffused with that old-fashioned spirit of tranquility which comes to men who know how to live in the spirit and comes to none other.

Among other Philadelphians of the Duesseldorf School who deserve recognition, we mention the Ferrises, father and son; the Morans, Thomas, Edward and Peter, the first of whom won national reputation by his painting of the "Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone" and the "Chasm of the Colorado" purchased by Congress, now hanging in the nation's Capitol; Bernard Uhle, J. B. Sword, William U. Willcox, W. A. Porter, E. Taylor Snow, Thomas B. Craig, Kirkpatrick, William Sartain, Alexander Galder, DeCrano, the two Schells, Milne Ramsay, Charles Stephens and Linford. These and many more, among them not a few women kept alive the embers, when there were few to stir the fire and little fuel to boil the pot.

Most noted, however, among the representatives of this school were Bierstadt, Church, Charles Moore and Farrar. The last two especially are exact literalists, relying too much in their art on its local truth of design and hue, and on the topographical exactitude of representation paying too little attention to the sentiment of nature and the language of color, the strong point of the idealists. Bierstadt's famous "Rocky Mountain," for which he received \$25,000, while Raphael received thirty crowns for his "Ezekiel," looks cold and untruthful. Its interest is confined to a tableau—like inventory of an extensive view, and its effect on the mind is similar to sounding phrases of little meaning. Church's "Niagara," with no more sentiment, hard atmosphere and metallic flow of water gives greater local truth, but is also a literal transcript of the scene.

Such is some of the American pioneer work done on the canvas.

More strenuous and mediocre were the executions in marble. Everywhere, except in Italy, sculpture in those days fell behind painting. American sculpture in some respects was more ambitious than its sister art, it aspired to a higher range of motive and greater originality. The greater public demands for monuments and a more elaborate architecture, for costly busts, cheap copies of classical marbles or other crude fancies of second-hand sentiment, portrait statues or bad effigies in stone of imperfect nudity in the flesh, stimulated a host of would-be artists to furnish productiveness. It forced an inept art on an unprepared public as its standard of good in this direction. Even Boston had its share of such art. Let us recall the statue of St. Alessio in the garb of a pilgrim on the façade of Santa Trinita, Florence. Here is life-like movement and character, although merely intended for outdoor decorations. Let us compare with it the statues on the Terrace lawn in front of the Massachusetts State House. On the right, as we ascend, Daniel Webster, in bronze, by Hiram Powers, erected in 1859, looking as though he had been built up after an intense study of his last suit of clothing. On the right Horace Mann in bronze, by Emma Stebbing (1855), resembling a scarecrow in a cornfield, formless and void, holding out the sleeve that does duty for an arm as if for charity. In Doric Hall there stands the statue of Washington in marble, by Sir Francis Chantrey, given in 1829 to the State by the Washington Monument Association, seemingly void either in shape or action of a spinal column. Not far from it in the Public Garden the graceful Everett bursting off his coat buttons in a frantic attempt to box the sky or hail George Washington to stop for him, while the granite Alexander Hamilton on Commonwealth avenue, by Dr. William Rimmer, seems intended for one of the Athenian Hermes in a Yankee guise, although this statue is not lacking some of the elements of great art, especially the head, which vividly recalls Rodin's Balzac.

THE ERA OF FRENCH INFLUENCES

Finally the deliverer came, a Vermonter, the son of an old New England family, with fine traditions, generations of culture and inherited genius for the arts of the beautiful. William Morris Hunt, born in 1824, four years after Benjamin West had died, the son of Judge Jonathan Hunt. His mother, a Leavitt of Connecticut, had

shown a strong desire for drawing and painting, but the desire met with a strong rebuke from her father. What had been denied her she richly granted her children, working with them until she, too, had carried out her early plans, as the portrait of her son from her brush sufficiently proves. Being left a widow in early life she moved with her family to Italy after William had been rusticated at Harvard for "being too fond of amusement." The latter had begun drawing, modelling and cutting cameos under an Italian teacher while still in America. He continued in Italy and later in France under Louis Barye, one of the greatest of his craft. Intending to go on with his studies in sculpture, he was advised to go to Duesseldorf. He found the place very agreeable socially and artistically, having for friends and companions, Lessing, the president of the Academy; Sohn, Leutze, Schroedter and others, but was shocked at their system of study, a grinding process aiming at the acquirement of mechanical skill. He felt what became afterwards the abiding belief of his life, that the study of art should be a pleasure and not a forced and hateful drill. He finally gave up his intention of entering the painting class and left for Paris to study with Pradier. This resolve ended the Duesseldorf influences on American art. Henceforth France became the Mecca of all lovers of the beautiful—the period of French influence on American art begins. Hunt, however, did not go to Pradier; having accidentally seen Couture's "Falconer," he entered his studio. Couture's method of painting was to make first a careful and, if possible, stylish or elegant outline drawing of the subject, adding only a few simple values with a frottee of their color, and leaving them to dry over night. Next day another thin frottee was used in portions, and with long-haired whipping brushes the color was laid on, the dark of the right depth of tone, the light thickly and with startling brilliancy. Not one stroke could be retouched or mud would ensue. The middle tones required the utmost nerve, feeling and decision, but their quality, when just right, was delightful and fascinating. No wonder that this method of painting attracted artists and students from every part of the world. It was a sublime reaction from the dry-as-dust German painting then in vogue and from the so-called classic painting of France prevailing in the early years of the nineteenth century. Hunt carried it further than his master. A study of Rembrandt's "Night Watch" in Amsterdam showed him that his Couture palette was not sufficient. He must buy other colors and study the works of the old masters. The great masters of Venice and of Holland still re-

mained unapproached. Hunt looked around for better things. William Babcock, the Boston painter, not quite Hunt's equal, took him to Barbizon and introduced him to Jean Francois Millet, whose wonderful picture "The Sower" had greatly impressed him. The friendship between Hunt and Millet, the American cavalier with his splendid horses and fine hounds, and the humble Frenchman who lived in a cellar, as his friends called his studio, is one of the most remarkable in history. Hunt came into Millet's life like a flood of sunshine, Millet into Hunt's like a new revelation from heaven. Millet was not only a great artist but a great man. Hunt learned from him not only the value of a figure, of light and shadow, but he got from him his broad views of humanity, his appreciation of Shakespeare, Homer and the bible. He said of him: "He is the only man since the bible was written, who expressed things in a biblical way." Hunt's first portrait was a one-quarter length likeness of his mother. It was queenly and gracious and attracted at once attention. His "Hurdy-Gurdy Boy, 1851, was the first picture sold in America. Others rapidly followed, among them "The Belated Kid," the "Violet Girl," and the "Girl at the Fountain." The deep-toned, richly-colored "Fortune Teller," a canvas with three figures, was bought by Mr. Frank Brooks for \$300, later Mr. Gregerson secured it for \$800 and after the artist's death it was sold for \$5,000.

The difference between Hunt's works before and after his meeting with Millet is shown by his two "Marguerites." The first was exhibited in the salon of 1852 and was one of the ten selected by the emperor Louis Napoleon for purchase—but Hunt refused to sell it. The second is a replica but with Millet's genius reflected in it. All his pictures of the last period show an undue attention to technique, while those of the second period excel in keen perception of character and color betraying the storm and stress of middle life. In his third period his colors became lighter and purer with great gain in creative force. On his return to America in the fifties he entered upon a career that was difficult, depressing and wearisome, because he was neither understood nor appreciated. However, like all noble souls, he found consolation in helping those who needed encouragement and assistance. What Benjamin West had been to the American artists in England, Hunt became in America. Foxcroft, Cole, Bicknell, Elihu Vedder, Thomas Robinson and others owe their first renown to him, for he bought their works and exhibited them. He urged rich men to purchase the works of Corot, Millet, Diaz, Barye, and other great masters, for he wanted his fel-

low townsmen to feel that they lived in an era of great art. It is therefore largely due to him that the best French pictures were bought for Boston homes and galleries. He lost heavily in the great Boston fire of 1872, but, undismayed started over again and opened a studio, where he gave his famous art talks, inspiring many of his pupils to carry his art gospel through the length and breadth of the land. His greatest achievements and with them his greatest sorrow came to him towards the end of his life, when he received from the State of New York an invitation to paint two great mural lunettes, each sixteen by forty feet, for the Assembly Chamber of the new Capitol in Albany.

They were epoch-making, inaugurating the era of mural painting in America. His task was Herculean. He was expected to accomplish in five months what would have taken Raphael five years or more. But he was equal to the emergency. Day and night he worked, denying himself to his friends, concentrating all his energies upon the one great task, testing the stone of the building, studying the light effects and working out in charcoal and paint the details of the two allegories which he had chosen. The one embodied the story of Columbus, the other "Anahita," the great drama of his life, both dreams of his younger days; the original of the latter is now adorning one of the walls of the Philadelphia Academy. The former, called "The Discoverer," represented Columbus crossing the dark ocean, attended solely by Faith, Hope, Fortune and Science, and symbolizing the masculine force crossing the water of destiny; the latter he named "The Flight of the Night." Anihita, the Persian goddess of the moon and the night, symbolizing the feminine force, is driven from the realms of phantasy and unreality by the dawn of civilization and plunges with her airy car into the dark and hidden caverns of supersition and barbaric thought, while the attending slave and the sleeping forms of a human mother and child suggest others worlds, where love and tranquility dwell. The contending forces of day and night light the darkness, heighten the beauty of her Pagan countenance and make her as tragic and typical a figure as that of Columbus and a fitting counterpart.

But Hunt was ultimately doomed to disappointment. Just ten years after these wonderful first attempts at mural paintings were begun not a trace of them was left on the walls of the Albany State House, they had completely flaked off. The causes are hidden in mysterious discrepancies between contracts and their fulfillment, but the artist had died in September, 1879, worn and broken-hearted. On

the 11th of November of the same year, a memorial exhibition of the works of William Morris Hunt was opened at the Museum of the Fine Arts, Boston, which lasted several months and proved one of the most remarkable ever held in this country. It contained two hundred oil paintings and one hundred and nineteen charcoal and pastel drawings, three specimens of sculpture and one cameo. It was in a high degree representative of his career, his progress and his hopes. It showed his early efforts in the French Romantic School, his ambition to paint historic or Biblical compositions, as the masters especially Couture, were doing in those days. It also gave evidence of the turning points in his career, when he cared no more for his acknowledged success and worked humbly and ardently with Millet, when he began to paint his own ideal pictures, when he laid these aside for a time to come home to America, when he gave himself wholly to portraiture, when he again in moments of leisure turned to his beloved ideal, when life began to be hard and teaching was in order, when health began to fail and expenses were hard to meet, when he tried landscape and he again felt the reins of power in his hands; when nothing short of the Falls of Niagara claimed his splendid abilities, when the great opportunity of his came and he launched fearlessly upon the untried sea of great mural painting. No wonder the exhibition made a great impression. It marked an epoch in American Art.

Among Hunt's contemporaries who showed the first effects of romantic awakening there appeared such artists as Henry Bisbing; Mary Cassat, with her homely Madonnas, bringing into human touch the sentiment of maternity without loss of artistic reserve; Eakins, with his massive and severe embodiments of early American domestic life as well as of Biblical subjects, among which must be mentioned the colossal figures of the prophets, adorning the Wither-
spoon Building in Philadelphia; John J. Boyle, authentic in his rude strength; Poore, the portrait painter of his comrade and servant, the hound; Carl Newman, experimentalist, with day and candle light, and lover of flowers; Birge Harrison who measures his capacity so unerringly in snow pieces; Daniel Ridgway Knight in his composition of homely sentiment; Charles N. Frohmut, with pastels of boats, which have won the enthusiasm of Rodin and Thaulow; Alexander Harrison, the interpreter of the sea and winner of French decorations; Cecelia Beaux, unexcelled in her etchings; finally, the lovable, self-forgetting Thomas Hovenden, who held to the English tradition, modified by what he had caught from Duesseldorf. His

picture of John Brown kissing the negro infant and his pathetic masterpiece, "Breaking Homes Ties," belong with much else he produced among the works safe from oblivion. John McLure Hamilton, who went by way of Antwerp and Paris to London and painted masterly portraits of men foremost in English life, such as Gladstone, Cardinal Newman, Professor Tyndal, and others, but finally won recognition from France, which placed his smaller portrait of Gladstone with the exclusive few American works in the Luxemburg.

The chief glory of the French Romantic School in America, however, rests with William Page, George Innes, John La Farge, Furness and Babcock. They are full-fledged modernists, captured by the dominant note of "plain air." The studio was no longer the background of great art; the sky itself was to furnish light from first sources, and all painting was to be done in the open air from first impressions, not from memory. Not the object itself was to be put on the canvas but merely its impressions and in the most fugitive way. Special stress was laid upon color values. It had been discovered that light not only reveals color but also modifies it, that a very brilliant light does not make shadows darker but lighter and more transparent, that sunlight does not add a golden but a silver hue to objects, that each single blade of grass in the meadow is not purely green, but reflects all the colors of the rainbow, however, only the total impression of green is left in the memory. Light itself became the object of the painter's brush, as it floats through the air and suffuses all objects in its path, reflecting and refracting a thousandfold all its variegated beams. A blooming orchard in spring no longer shows on the canvas its dark stems and branches; they vanish and a perfect, floating cloud of blossoms, full of fragrance and rhythm of color, is presented by the modernist. A classicist like Goethe had condemned such attempts as utterly unpictorial, and the old Academies, especially in America, strictly held to the rule.

(To be continued.)